

## JANETTE DEAN

Environmental Policy & Human Rights Advocate – MN, WI, CA, NV + Nat'l  
Equal Rights Amendment Advocate (2014-Present) – NV, IL, VA, MN + Nat'l.  
Caledonia, MN by La Crosse, WI  
JanetteNoelle@gmail.com • (507) 500-0142

*March 1, 2023*

House State and Local Government Finance & Policy Committee  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Support for House File 197 “A resolution memorializing Congress to resolve that the requirements have been met to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and that it shall now be known as the Twenty-Eighth Amendment to the Constitution.”**

Dear Chair Klevorn, Vice Chair Huot and Committee Members:

The State of Minnesota ratified the essential Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as the 26<sup>th</sup> state to do so on February 8, 1973 and should do all it can to help make the ERA a reality. Please therefore vote for passage of House File 197 authored by Honorable Representative Kristin Bahner and 34 others during this crucial session year and Women’s History Month.

While the Nineteenth Amendment of 1920 states that: “**The right of citizens of the United States to vote** shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”, the full and recently-ratified Equal Rights Amendment would beneficially add the legal directive that, “**Equality of rights under the law** shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” which refers to all rights in our Constitution (bolded emphasis added).

We subsequently need the ERA to become an even more urgent priority across all three of our executive, legislative and judicial branches **as well as all 38 ratified states** and those aiming to ratify soon or in the future. Those who have the privilege of working as public servants and officials anywhere in our country should be doing all they possibly can to help the U.S. properly and finally expand upon the equal right to vote in order to ensure that the Constitution offers all of its rights to all citizens as equal rights.

In fact, not one person in the U.S. who believes our constitutional republic is meant to be “one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all” should be satisfied with — nor tolerate — having just ONE equal right in our constitution year after year and century after century. And yet, that reality will remain the case as long as our constitution continues to be interpreted by judges in crucial Supreme Court cases as a constitution that still allows sex discrimination. This is due to an unethical situation where only “skeptical scrutiny” (aka “intermediate scrutiny”) is being used to determine illegal sex discrimination vs. the “strict scrutiny” needed to win many important lawsuits. The ERA would fix that chronic problem.

It is certainly every generation's moral responsibility to help stop the social injustice of our constitution failing to protect all of its citizens as well as residents and visitors who are living in or traveling in our country. Without the ERA, which has already taken a century to pass and ratify, many of the harmful social problems and individual situations that sex discrimination still causes right here in the U.S. will be allowed to continue.

Social justice is defined on the Oxford Reference website as "The objective of creating a fair and equal society in which each individual matters, their rights are recognized and protected, and decisions are made in ways that are fair and honest." Utilizing ethical human thought as well in its publication, the U.S.-based Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines social justice in a way that also strongly reveals the necessity of the Equal Rights Amendment with its definition of social justice being "a state or doctrine of egalitarianism" and egalitarianism being "1: a belief in human equality especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs, and 2: a social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among people."

Social justice — plus the willingness to act for it — are indeed essential to human ethics, progress and democracy.

I, therefore, call upon everyone (including all legislators in the Minnesota Legislature) to help each other in many areas of needed social justice, including by showing for publication of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Constitution as the 28th Amendment now and insisting upon its certification.

Sincerely,

*Janette Dean*

*Minnesota-raised Janette Dean is an environmental policy and human rights advocate and organizer who helped Nevada ratify the Equal Rights Amendment as the lead grassroots organizer there from 2014-2017 (see: <https://sites.google.com/view/nevadansfortheera/>) . She currently lives and works in her home state of Minnesota. To see the beginning steps of the Equal Rights Amendment's journey and Nevada's victory to ratification, visit: <https://prezi.com/view/ClzKezAQAEDP4lV9dBHb/>.*